

July 23, 2004

Chairman Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED

NOV 16 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to add my voice to the growing number of groups and individuals **opposed** to efforts by the local Bell telephone companies to circumvent current rules on calls placed with a pre-paid calling card. If they succeed, it will result in higher rates – in many cases, dramatically higher rates – for consumers who place the calls. As you approach your work on this docket, I implore you to keep the needs of consumers in mind rather than the pleadings of the four Bell companies.

The Bell companies want to target those calls in which a caller uses a pre-paid calling card and dials a toll-free number, along with his or her PIN. The caller, who may be in Virginia, for example, is connected to a “platform” in another state -- let’s say in Nebraska. From this “platform,” he or she hears a message about a company, non-profit or person. The caller then dials the telephone number of someone in Virginia. Current rules, as well as common sense, state that this represents two calls, one from Virginia to Nebraska and one from Nebraska to Virginia. Both calls are subject to interstate access charges because there is a call to Nebraska and then a separate call to Virginia.

But the Bell companies want to treat this as a single in-state call so they can levy exorbitant in-state access charges. Such fees have no relationship whatsoever to the Bell companies’ actual costs, which are only a fraction of what they want to charge consumers.

Prices are already rising for gas, milk and other products. Consumers don’t need higher prices for phone calls too, especially when these higher rates represent a blatant giveaway to four large corporations.

I am aware that the long distance companies and others that sell pre-paid calling cards have weighed in with the FCC in an effort to protect their customers’ interests in this manner. It is now time for the FCC to weigh in on the side of consumers and show the Bell companies the door on this issue.

Sincerely,



ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
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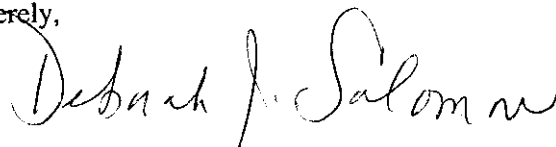
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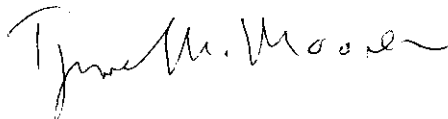
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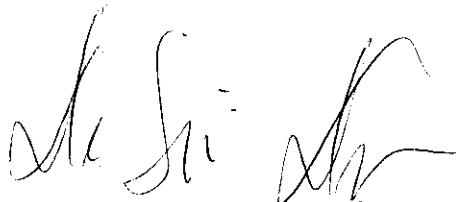
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RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

Minority communities living in urban areas rely upon low-cost telephone services to accomplish many every day tasks, from looking for a job or affordable housing to staying in touch with family and friends. I am concerned that the FCC is considering new charges and fees upon pre-paid calling cards, which would raise prices for consumers nationwide.

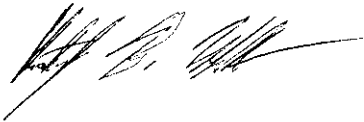
In particular, minority consumers living on fixed incomes or those without the means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service rely on prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set, affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, military personnel, and others face similar challenges.

As a result, prepaid calling cards often are the only option available – without them, some consumers would, quite literally, be out of choices for staying connected. Raising the price of prepaid services will directly harm those that can least afford price increases.

Imposing new charges and fees would amount to a substantial increase in the per-minute cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to many consumers in our community. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices and would make these services substantially less affordable.

Please look out for consumers by refusing to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Sincerely,



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Dear Chairman Powell:


Hispanic and other minority communities rely upon low-cost telecommunications services to accomplish many every day tasks, from looking for a job or affordable housing to staying in touch with family and friends. But pending before the FCC is a proposal that would introduce new charges and fees upon services upon which we depend, immediately harming millions of Hispanic and other consumers nationwide.

I understand that the FCC is considering applying "in-state" access charges and other fees on certain prepaid calling card services. Many Hispanics, particularly those on fixed incomes or those establishing the credit history, bank accounts and other means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service, rely upon these prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, and others face similar challenges.

As a result, prepaid calling cards are the **only** option available – without them, they could, quite literally, be out of choices for staying connected. Raising the price of prepaid services will directly harm those that can least afford price increases.

Imposing in-state charges would amount to a substantial increase in the cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to disadvantaged consumers. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices and would certainly make these services substantially less affordable. Please look out for consumers and refuse to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

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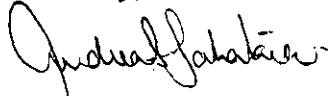
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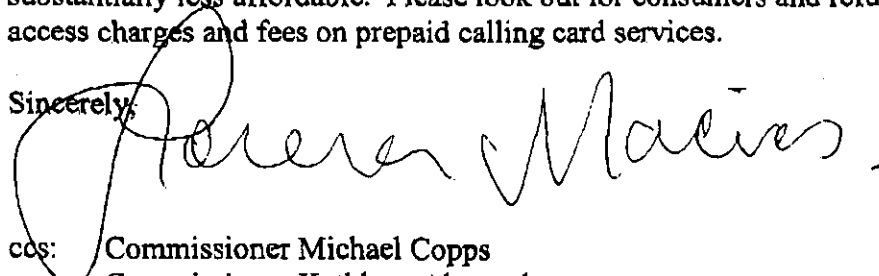
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Martinez", is written over the "Sincerely," and extends down into the "cc:" line.

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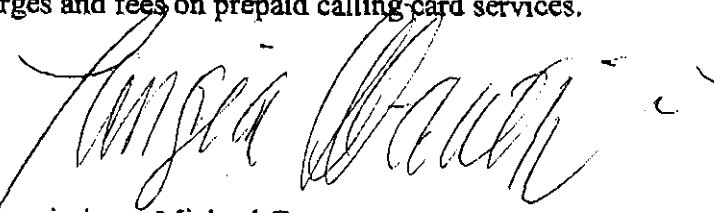
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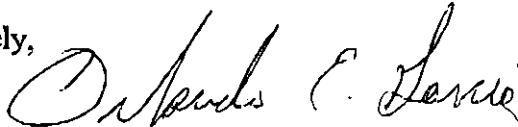
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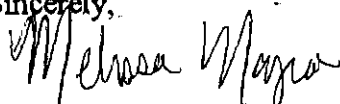
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I understand that the FCC is considering applying "in-state" access charges and other fees on certain prepaid calling card services. Many Hispanics, particularly those on fixed incomes or those establishing the credit history, bank accounts and other means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service, rely upon these prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, and others face similar challenges.


As a result, prepaid calling cards are the **only** option available – without them, they could, quite literally, be out of choices for staying connected. Raising the price of prepaid services will directly harm those that can least afford price increases.

Imposing in-state charges would amount to a substantial increase in the cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to disadvantaged consumers. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices and would certainly make these services substantially less affordable. Please look out for consumers and refuse to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Sincerely,



ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein



September 16, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

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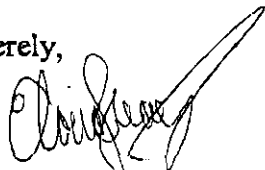
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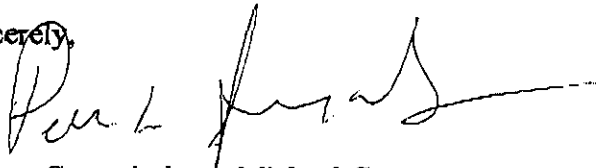
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